

THE HOME CIRCLE

Evening at the Farm.

Over the hill the farm-boy goes.
His shadow lengthens along the land,
A giant staff in a giant hand;
In the poplar tree, above the spring,
The katydid begins to sing;
The early dews are falling;—
Into the stone-heap darts the mink;
The swallows skim the river's brink;
And home to the woodland fly the crows,
When over the hill the farm-boy goes,
Cheerily calling,
"Co, boss! co, boss! co! co! co!"
Farther, farther, over the hill,
Faintly calling, calling still,
"Co, boss! co, boss! co! co!"

Into the yard the farmer goes,
With grateful heart, at the close of day:
Harness and chain are hung away;
In the wagon-shed stand yoke and plough,
The straw's in the stack, the hay in the mow,
The cooling dews are falling;—
The friendly sheep his welcome bleat,
The pigs come grunting to his feet,
And the whinnying mare her master knows,
When into the yard the farmer goes,
His cattle calling—
"Co, boss! co, boss! co! co! co!"
While still the cow-boy, far away,
Goes seeking those that have gone astray,—
"Co, boss! co, boss! co! co!"

Now to her task the milkmaid goes.
The cattle come crowding through the gate,
Lowing, pushing, little and great;
About the trough, by the farm-yard pump,
The frolicsome yearlings frisk and jump,
While the pleasant dews are falling;—
The new milch-heifer is quick and shy,
But the old cow waits with tranquil eye,
And the white stream into the bright pail flows,
When to her task the milkmaid goes,
Soothingly calling,
"So, boss! so, boss! so! so! so!"
The cheerful milkmaid takes her stool,
And sits and milks in the twilight cool,
Saying, "So! so, boss! so! so!"

To supper at last the farmer goes.
The apples are pared, the paper read,
The stories are told, then all to bed.
Without, the crickets' ceaseless song
Makes shrill the silence all night long.
The heavy dews are falling.
The housewife's hand has turned the lock;
Drowsily ticks the kitchen clock;
The household sinks to deep repose,
But still in sleep the farm-boy goes
Singing, calling,—
"Co, boss! co, boss! co! co! co!"
And oft the milkmaid, in her dreams,
Drums in the pail with the flashing streams,
Murmuring, "So, boss! so!"
—John Townsend Trowbridge.

Written for The Progressive Farmer.]

"The Iniquity of the Father."

I was hurrying along one of the main streets of the city of G——, on a bright September morning, when my attention was suddenly arrested by the sight of a man sitting couched upon the curbstone of the sidewalk. As I thought I knew him, I was a little puzzled as to why he was sitting there in that posture. But casually casting my eyes upward, I no longer wandered at his strange attitude, for, I beheld, written in large letters, on a broad long board, this sign: "Paddy Welcher's Wine and Beer Saloon."

Drawing near the object of my curiosity—now my pity—my suspicions as to his identity were too truly confirmed. For it was no other than Samuel Homer. My first impulse was to hasten away, but a power of my being, which I could not control, stayed my footsteps, even before the sneering gaze of the thronged sidewalk, until I, for a few moments, contemplated the pitiful, forlorn man sitting there writhing in the delirium of drink! Ah, what a race he had run! What a space he had traversed, on the dark steed Alcohol, in so short a time! Yes, from the beautiful

Elysium in which he was wont to dwell, to the last resort on the barren waste of life!

I knew him in his noble young manhood. No boy throughout all the countryside was more ambitious and aspiring, or entertained higher ideals in life than he did. But alas! so much for the decree of the fifth Commandment. Young Homer's father was a man of sterling worth, and a good citizen as the term generally goes, though from an indifferent social environment and a long inherent principle, his mind had become so atrophied on this singular subject, that the free and unrestrained use of strong drink was, by his ethical code, a divine right of citizenship. Thus he not only had but little patience with the advocates of "total abstinence," but took a social drink whenever he cared to, nor did he hesitate, on special occasions, to give it to his children. And, he had persuaded himself to believe that in so doing he violated no law of God or man.

It was not so very surprising to those who were acquainted with the atmosphere in which young Samuel Homer was nourished, to know that in passing from boyhood to manhood, that he also passed from a drink with the boys to a drunk with the men. After a season of wild oat sowing, he apparently reformed, married a noble young lady of the village community, and settled down seemingly to a life of sobriety and thrift. In truth, so well did he do, for a while, that his friends were in high hopes that he had thoroughly overcome his old habits of dissipating. But alas! as is so seldom the case, that when once the human system becomes inoculated with the noxious germs of alcohol, especially in childhood, that it is ever afterwards completely eradicated. Thus so, after a brief few years of conjugal felicity, the old fires burst up within his soul again, and his passion for strong drink bore down all opposition. And, from bad to worse, he soon became a confirmed drunkard.

Homer's intentions—so much for that misleading term, which mankind are so prone to use in an effort to make amends for their short comings—were good. In fact, his good nature was superior to his bad, when the latter was unaided by its ally, strong drink. But while he was a kind husband and loving father, when sober, yet, he willingly waisted the sustenance that should have been expended on his family, during his prolonged debauches, until the wolf was ever wont to howl around his door sill.

Having finished my business transactions in the city, I boarded the evening train for my village home, some half dozen miles out. The train had proceeded three or four miles on its way when it was brought to a stop so suddenly as to throw me forward out of my seat. Making my way through the hub-bub of the passengers to the vestibule of the car, I saw several of the trainmen hastening back to where several others were grouped about some object lying upon the track. But a few moments suffice to place me in their midst. When, what was my pitiful horror to behold, mangled almost beyond recognition, emitting the repulsive odors of liquor and gasping in the last agonies of death, the carnal remains of Samuel Homer! Lifting my eyes from contemplating the gruesome spectacle, I intuitively, looked off to the westward, for, I knew that nestled among yonder low-lying range of wooded hills, over which the autumnal sunset was shedding a halo of glory, was a cottage home. And, there a loving wife and children were anxiously waiting the return of him whose ghastly remains were lying here upon the ground—but the clay tenement of a life that had fled back into that abyss from whence it came; it itself soon to be tumbled into a drunkard's grave; and the soul, gone—gone to a drunkard's Hell!

Walter, N. C.

W. H. CALDWELL.

Every reader of The Progressive Farmer should send us at least one new subscriber during 1904. Have you done so?

The Women of Russia.

According to Dr. Wolf von Schierbrand, writing in the September Delineator, the curious and appalling discrepancy between the lot of the grande dame in Russia and that of the women of the middle or lower classes is the result, not so much of greater wealth, as of a complete reversal of standards. The Russian aristocracy is cosmopolitan, and its women are, like the women of the powerful advancing nations of western Europe, an independent force, leading in society and domestic life; but the women of the bulk of the nation are still Oriental, and more the slaves than the helpmates of their husbands. The condition of these women is miserable in its degradation and hopelessness. As the author concludes, "Their outlook and their opportunities seem to be less advanced and their social status on a lower plane than in almost any other European country."

Tabooed Topics.

An interesting movement for the revival of the almost lost art of conversation is reported from England, and in a recent address on the subject one of its sponsors said: "There is no real conversation nowadays. We talk about the weather and our ailments and call that conversation."

We really believe that the banishment of these two topics from our daily conversation would inure to the better mental and physical health of all of us, says Robert Webster Jones in the August Housekeeper. On a wet, dreary day what is more depressing than to have a friend repeatedly call our attention to the weather? The inevitable effect is to cause our spirits to fall with the barometer. How often it happens on a summer day, when the thermometer is soaring in the nineties and we are managing to keep fairly cool in some shady nook, that a friend drops in, perspiring from every pore, and mopping his face with his handkerchief, exclaims: "Whew, but it's hot!" We had not noticed the temperature particularly before, but now that our attention is called to the evident torridity we feel ten degrees warmer and we blame our friend for having in some way brought the heat with him. And we are right.

The other conversational topic referred to, our ailments, should unquestionably be sentenced to perpetual banishment from respectable society. Even the least imaginative of us is prone to acquire a friend's symptoms, in minor degree, from listening sympathetically to their recital, and such is the subtle effect of mind upon body, that often we do not suspect the real cause of our indisposition.

Even if we are not interested in making conversation an art, let us taboo these two most undesirable and easily dispensable topics.

This account of a conversation between an officer and a private comes from the Philippines, says the Chicago News. An officer of the day, meeting a sentinel on outpost, paused to ask him if he knew his orders.

"Yes, sir," said the sentinel.

Officer: "Suppose you were rushed by one hundred bolomen, what would you do?"

"Form a line, sir," replied the sentinel.

"What! One man form a line?"

"Yes, sir; I'd form a bee-line for camp!"

An unprecedented crop of wheat has been gathered from the farms in Randolph County this year. One of the roller mills at Ashboro bought from wagons on Saturday last more than 1,000 bushels, paying one dollar per bushel cash for it. The high price paid for last year's crop of cotton has induced a number of Randolph farmers to experiment with it this year. Town people have a number of acres planted within the corporate limits of the town. It is looking fine, and it is quite a novelty in the vicinity as very few Ashboro folks ever saw it growing before.